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Evangelism Conference slated Jan. 21-22

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

The 2002 Mississippi Baptist Evangelism Conference will be held at Colonial Heights Church, Jackson, on January 21-22.

According to Sonny Adkins, director of the Evangelism Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), this year's conference has something for every Mississippi Baptist pastor and layperson.

"As a pastor," Adkins said, "I always went to the Evangelism Conference to be challenged to go back to my church, renewed in evangelism. I always enjoyed the fellowship, and I was committed to going back home and doing a better job."

Speakers include Junior Hill, evangelist from Hartselle, Ala.; Nelson Price, pastor emeritus of Roswell Street Church, Kennesaw, Ga.; Fred Lowery, pastor, First Church, Bossier City, La.; Len Turner, evangelist, Woodstock, Ga.; and Mac Brunson, pastor, First Church, Dallas. Music will be provided by R. L. and Beth Sigrest, music evangelists from Yazoo City.

The Colonial Heights adult choir, led by the church's minister of music Larry Kulke,

and the Mississippi Singing Churchmen will provide additional music.

"One important difference this year is that the January 22 morning session will be presented by the Mississippi vocational evangelists," said Adkins. "They planned the entire session, preaching and music."

Preachers for that session include Billy Smith, Tim Posey, and Charles Smithy. Mona Faith, Steve Walker, Ronnie Cottingham, and Gerald and Cindy Simmons will provide music.



Hill



Brunson



The Sigrests

"This year's theme is Two by Two," Adkins stated. "We're commanded to go, teach, and baptize. These commands don't change just because it's the twenty-first century."

Adkins stressed that the evangelism conference isn't just for pastors. "It's for church staff and laymen, too," he emphasized.

"Pastors should invite and encourage their lay people to attend. They'll leave spiritually challenged. They'll be encouraged to be about the commission of the church," Adkins said.

Adkins noted that while the conference is in Jackson in 2002, the event is scheduled for other areas of the state in years to come.

"In 2003, we'll be in Tupelo," he said. "In 2004 we'll be back in Jackson, then in 2005 we'll be in Hattiesburg."

The conference begins January 21 at 1:30 p.m. and concludes January 22 at 9 p.m. There is no charge to attend the conference. Childcare is not provided.

For more information, contact the MBCB Evangelism Department at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3278 or toll free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 278. E-mail: pbozeman@mcb.org.

Philly, Seattle to be 2002 Strategic Cities Focus

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — Philadelphia and Seattle in many ways are a study in contrasts, from the historic birthplace of our nation's freedoms in the Northeast to the high-tech epicenter of the Northwest — but Southern Baptists in both cities are ramping up for a common goal: impacting their communities with the Gospel and seeing lives transformed by the Christian gospel as never before.

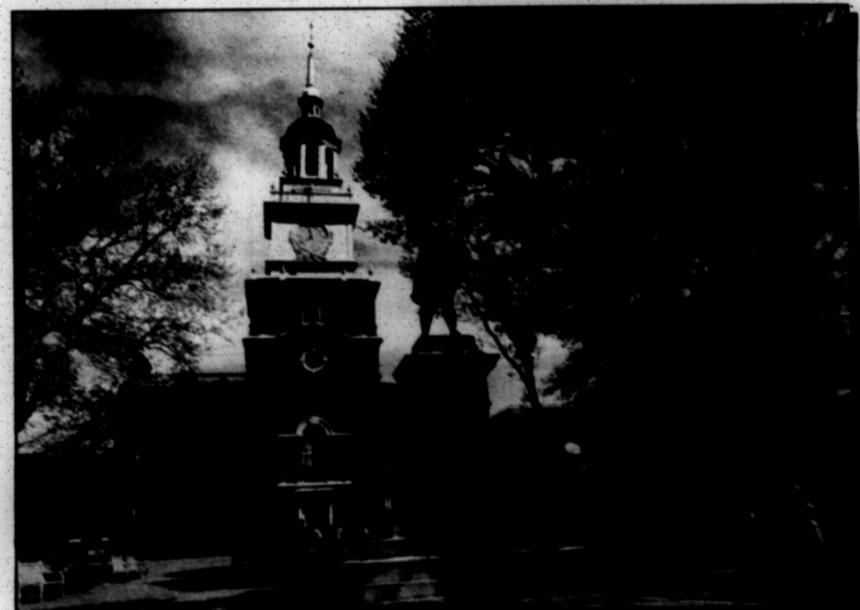
They'll do it with the help of volunteers from across the country through the North American Mission Board (NAMB) Strategic Focus Cities (SFC) outreach efforts.

The 2002 campaigns follow SFC efforts in Chicago and Phoenix in 2000 and Boston and Las Vegas in 2001. Mississippi Baptists were participants in the Boston campaign through the Partnership Missions Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

John Eckle, city coordinator for the "Embracing Seattle" effort, described that city as largely unchurched, with little Christian influence.

"It's an area that is so steeped in recreation and entrepreneurship that people just don't seem to have time," said Eckle. "Their lives are so full that when they do have time they just want to get away from anything that might require commitment."

In Philadelphia, meanwhile, both the existing Southern Baptist presence and primary ministry areas are predominantly African-American and urban. Anglos make up only about 15% of the Southern Baptist churches, with predom-



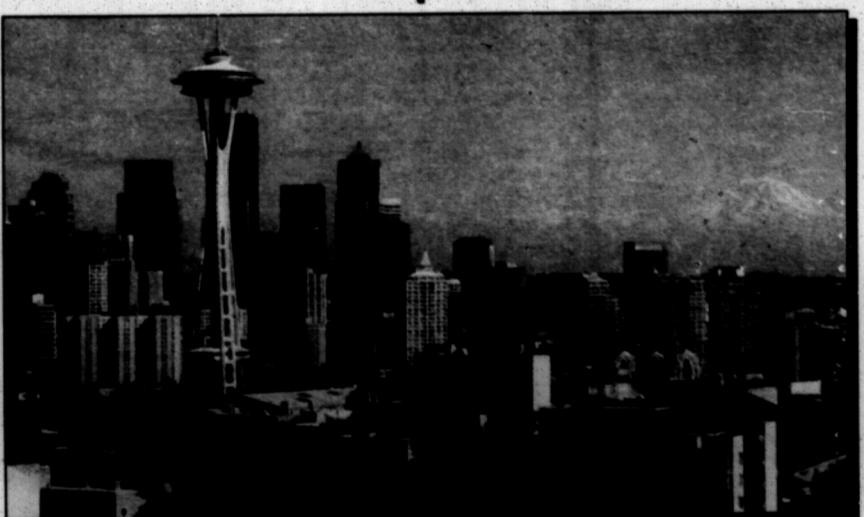
PHILADELPHIA — Landmarks like Independence Hall are identified with Philadelphia, which will be a key area for Strategic Focus Cities evangelism and church planting efforts in 2002. The ministry locally goes by the name Philadelphia Spirit: Let Freedom Ring. (BP photo)

inantly African American churches making up 65% and other languages approximately 20%, according to Kathy Sheldon, associate city coordinator for the "Philadelphia Spirit" SFC effort.

"At the present time we have only one Anglo congregation in Philadelphia, so there's a great

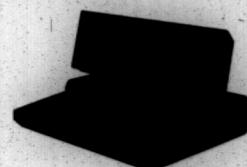
need for church planting," she said. Plans call for starting up to 70 new churches over the next two years.

For more on the Strategic Focus Cities efforts in the two cities and specific volunteer needs, visit www.embracingseattle.com or www.Philadelphiaspirit.com.



SEATTLE — Seattle will be a key area for Southern Baptist evangelism and church planting efforts in 2002 through the Strategic Focus Cities effort, which in Seattle goes by the name of Embracing Seattle: Arms Around the Sound. (BP photo courtesy of Seattle Convention and Visitors Bureau)

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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In the mad rush to the liquor stores during the just-completed holiday season, many Mississippians may have missed the important news that we have achieved yet another top ranking among our sister states — when it comes to alcohol-related traffic accidents, nobody kills more people per capita than we do.

We're number one! Can we get a cheer? We rank dismally low in education, income, health, transportation, infant mortality, and just about every other national indicator, but when it comes to alcohol deaths we're right up there at the top.

In Mississippi, more people die in drunk driving traffic accidents than in any other state. A great many of the fatalities are family breadwinners and children.

We're number one! Let's pat ourselves on the back. That's a statistic the Governor and his economic development staff can share with big industrial prospects. When your snooty relatives from Up North brag about living conditions in their state, you can now proudly tell them that Mississippi has them beat in at least one area.

Do the math for yourself. Danny Berry did. He's the state executive director for Mothers Against Drunk Driving and pastor of Galilee Church, Puckett.

Utilizing National Highway Traffic Safety Administration statistics for the year 2000, he calculated that more than 40% of traffic fatalities last year in Mississippi were alcohol-related. Figures released by the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, parent agency of the Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol, reinforce Berry's conclusions. We're number one!

Now, if 40% of the participants in any other activity were certain to die, there would be a grassroots uproar for legislation and regulation — if not for outright outlawing of the activity.

What if 40% of all young men who play high school football were sure to die? What if 40% of the people who attended a rock concert were killed? What if 40% of the folks who work in your office died, year in and year out?

Yet if there is a traffic fatality in Mississippi, the odds are only slightly less than even that the fatality will be traced to drunk driving.

We treat alcohol much differently than other social ills (with the exceptions of gambling and tobacco, the other components of Mississippi's triad of legal addictions). Alcohol issues are treated with special care in Mississippi.

Why? One reason is the money the alcohol lobby passes around. They can support politicians' campaigns, donate generously to civic events, and buy scores of "Drink Responsibly" advertisements in newspapers and electronic media — as if their goal is to minimize alcohol consumption.

There is hardly a citizen of this state who has not been affected in some way by drunk driving. Directly and indirectly, the costs of legal alcohol in Mississippi far outweigh any supposed tax benefits, especially when it comes to drunk driving. We're number one!

Yet every year when state Representative John Reeves, a member of First Church, Clinton, introduces his bill in the Mississippi Legislature to drop the threshold for a Driving Under the Influence change from .1 to .08 blood alcohol content, he is met with a flurry of outrage, indignation, and junk science. Some of the most powerful trade groups and lobbying organizations in the state have joined to crush the bill each year.

The result? We're number one!

Do you believe Mississippi should take a stronger stand against drunk driving?

Perhaps you should consider that ques-

We're number one!



tion the next time a vehicle you're meeting on a narrow road weaves into your lane just a little bit. Is the driver drunk? How would you know? Are you about to become a dark statistic?

Perhaps you should ask the highway patrolman who has tried in vain to resuscitate a dead child at the scene of a drunk driving accident, or maybe the firemen who have lost many races against time to extract people from horribly mangled cars.

Perhaps you should talk with the doctor who had to account for all the body parts of a mother torn apart in a high-speed, head-on collision with a drunk driver, or the pastor who has lost count of the funerals he has conducted for drunk driving victims.

As long as we ignore alcohol and drunk driving issues in Mississippi, the tragedies will continue to pile up year after year. You could certainly be next. Isn't it time we asked ourselves, when is enough, enough?

Remember — We're number one!

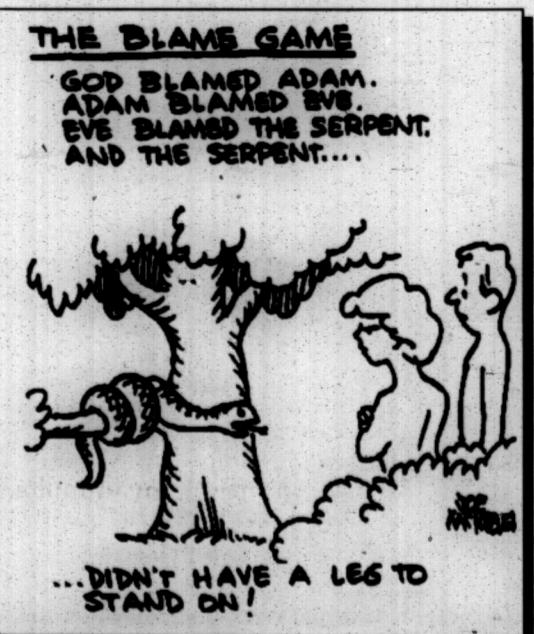
McKeever's Jan. Bible Study cartoons available

Joe McKeever, pastor of First Church in Kenner, La., and a former Mississippi pastor and church staffer, has released his annual January Bible Study cartoons to complement this year's study of Genesis 1-11.

McKeever, who draws editorial car-

toons for state Baptist newspapers and other publications, is syndicated by Baptist Press in Nashville. There is no charge for the January Bible Study cartoons if downloaded from www.fbckenner.org (click on Genesis cartoons).

A two-dollar fee to cover the costs of



Seminary pair filling dual roles at present

SAN ANTONIO (BP) — Lieutenant Colonel Timothy Reese and Chief Warrant Officer Five Robert Jordan are pulling double duty these days, as soldiers and ministers. Reese and Jordan, both long-time army veterans, recently began theological studies at Southwestern Seminary's San Antonio extension campus.

Reese, an army nurse, is the senior healthcare analyst for Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston. Jordan serves in the veterinary medicine division as a food inspector. Both men believe that God has provided them with the opportunity to serve as ambassadors for Christ in the armed forces, even while they prepare for their future ministries.

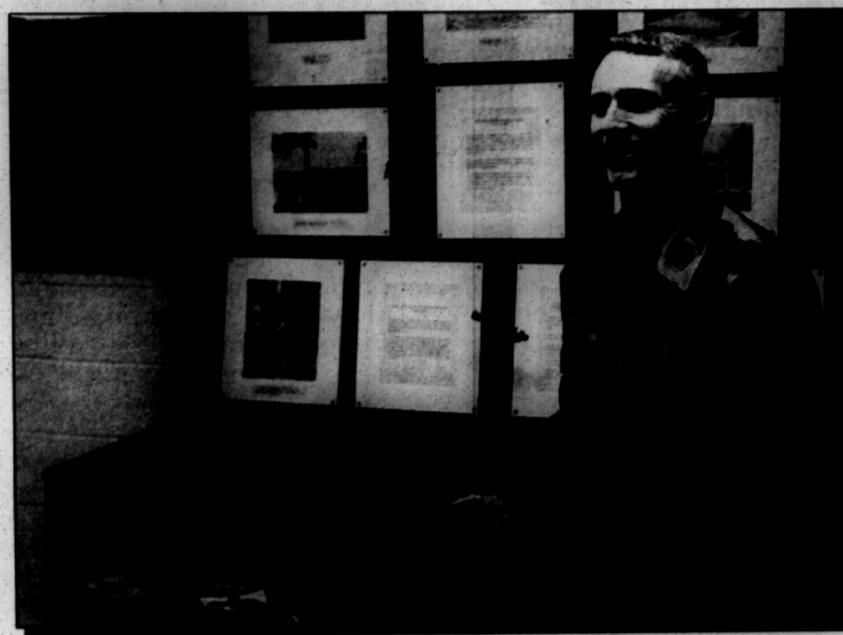
"I have many opportunities to share my faith," Jordan said. "Everywhere I've been stationed, I've felt like I was on the mission field. I've moved about

every three years, and there is always a place for us to work in a church. Seminary training will only enhance my ability to serve the Lord."

"God has given me the opportunity to minister, to look at our patients holistically, and to meet their needs physically and spiritually," Reese said. "I introduce myself to many people as 'pastor.' They often look puzzled and say, 'But you're a nurse.' I say, 'I am both.'"

Jessica Veilleux, chief of Volunteer Services at Brooke Army, commanded Reese on his dual role as minister and soldier. "I am in awe that he can address the psychological, social, physical, and spiritual needs of not just the patients, but of the whole staff," she said.

Jordan was the first of the two soldiers to sense a call into the ministry. When Jordan was 15 years old, he was invited to play baseball with the Royal



Jordan

Ambassadors (RA) at a local church. Although he admits that he was "really more interested in baseball than church," Jordan was ultimately led to Christ by his RA director. He enlisted in the army in 1972 after attending Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford, Okla. Nearly 10 years later, after achieving the rank of warrant officer, he sensed a call into the ministry.

"I sensed a calling, maybe not to be a pastor, but to teach in the field of education in the church," Jordan said. "So although I felt called to the ministry in 1981, I'm just beginning."

The delay in fulfilling his call to pursue a theological education was not his fault, he said. Jordan's wife was diagnosed with cancer and after a long battle, succumbed five years ago.

"Those times naturally made me have doubts about answered prayers, but my service and my faith never slowed down," Jordan said. "My wife and I never stopped going to church and we never stopped serving even in the middle of her illness."

Reese's call into the ministry came after the Persian Gulf War, where he was responsible for establishing a mobile army surgical hospital. After the war he moved to Waco, Tex., to pursue a master's degree in healthcare administration at Baylor

University. While there, Reese, who was raised in the United Methodist Church, began attending a Baptist church and was also baptized there.

Ironically, his wife Laura, who was reared a Jehovah's Witness, was baptized at nearly the same time in a Baptist church in Maryland where she was waiting to sell the family's home.

MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

THE BAPTIST
Record

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Reese

Aid workers rescued

MANDERA, Kenya (BP) — A Southern Baptist missionary pilot came to the rescue in mid-December of 16 Christian aid workers who had fled rioting in a northern Kenya town near the Ethiopia-Somalia border. In God's providence, he was available for the mission only because the flight planned for that day had been canceled. Violent demonstrations broke out in Mandera, Kenya, after authorities arrested an outspoken Muslim religious leader allegedly connected with Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda movement. Local youth raided a Catholic church and an agricultural training center. They set buildings and vehicles ablaze and looted property worth thousands of dollars in an effort to get the inmate released. Later that morning, hundreds of rioters encircled the aid workers' compound, chanting, throwing rocks and shooting rifles into the air. The aid workers said they could see homes of fellow Christians burning in the distance and knew they were in trouble. "They destroyed our house, our schools and threatened us," said one worker, who chose to stay behind to protect their property against looters and to encourage Christians in Mandera. An International Mission Board missionary pilot heard the distress call during his lunch break and scrambled his staff into action. The pilot works in conjunction with African Inland Mission to serve Christian workers in East Africa. "We knew that if these people were calling for help it was really bad," the pilot said. "Mandera is like the Wild West. The missionary pilot landed his plane at a nearby Kenyan military base so as to miss the tumult in town. Sixteen people crammed into the 13-passenger plane and were in the air within minutes, before any shots could be fired at the plane. "I feel fortunate God allowed me to help," said the pilot, whose name was withheld for security reasons.

10 years ago

A Cuban Baptist pastor's Christmas day sermon is the first evangelical message heard on Cuban radio in 28 years, according to the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America.

20 years ago

A law requiring the teaching of scientific creationism in public schools if evolution is taught is passed by the Mississippi Legislature. The bill, Senate Bill 2256, passes the Senate with a vote of 48-4.

50 years ago

During the Christmas holidays the Department of Mississippi Amvets presents the Baptist Orphanage with the latest model Admiral television. B. E. Graft, department commander, presented the set.

'Landmark year' anticipated at Gulfshore

PASS CHRISTIAN, Miss. (Special) — Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian, Mississippi Baptists' campground on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, has released its summer 2002 schedule and instituted a revised registration process.



SILVER ANNIVERSARY — Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian is celebrating 25 years of ministry since being rebuilt after Hurricane Camille destroyed the Mississippi Baptist campground in 1969. (Photo by Leroy Quinn)

"2002 will be a landmark year in the history of Gulfshore Assembly," said assembly manager Frank Simmons, in reference to the camp's twenty-fifth year of operation since being rebuilt after Hurricane Camille destroyed the facility in 1969.

The Gulfshore summer schedule, followed by contact information, includes:

- May 13-16 — 1 Senior Adult Conf.
- May 20-22 — 2 Senior Adult Conf.
- May 23-25 — 3 Senior Adult Conf.
- May 25-27 — Single Adult Conf.

For the above conferences, contact Glen Shows in the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3276 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 276. E-mail: gsmith@mcb.org.

- July 13-18 — 2 Centrifuge. Contact LifeWay Christian Resources (see above).
- July 18-20 — Older Children's Retreat. Contact LifeWay Christian Resources (see above).
- July 20-25 — 3 Centrifuge. Contact LifeWay Christian Resources (see above).
- July 25-27 — Growing Churches. Contact Don Hicks in the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department at MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3287 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 287. E-mail: dhicks@mcb.org.

For the above conferences, contact Mark Lott in the Sunday School Department at MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3295 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 295. E-mail: mlott@mcb.org.

- June 8-12 — 4 Youth Conf.
- June 13-17 — 5 Youth Conf.
- June 17-21 — 6 Youth Conf.

For the above conferences, contact Mark Lott in the Sunday School Department at MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3295 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 295. E-mail: mlott@mcb.org.

- June 21-25 — Young Musicians Conf. Contact Sarah Talley in the Church Music Department at MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3271 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 271. E-mail: stalley@mcb.org.

• June 25-29 — Heartsong '02. Contact Susan Clark in the Church Music Department at MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3274 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 274. E-mail: sclark@mcb.org.

- July 1-5 — Family Enrichment Conf. Contact Glen Shows (see above).

• July 6-11 — 1 Centrifuge. Contact LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention at Centrifuge, One LifeWay Plaza,

Nashville, TN 37234-0144. Toll-free telephone: (877) CAMP123. E-mail: debbie.lamberth@lifeway.com.

• July 11-13 — Music Leadership Conf. Contact L. Graham Smith, director of Church Music at MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3276 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 276. E-mail: gsmith@mcb.org.

- July 13-18 — 2 Centrifuge. Contact LifeWay Christian Resources (see above).

• July 18-20 — Older Children's Retreat. Contact LifeWay Christian Resources (see above).

- July 20-25 — 3 Centrifuge. Contact LifeWay Christian Resources (see above).

• July 25-27 — Growing Churches. Contact Don Hicks in the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department at MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3287 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 287. E-mail: dhicks@mcb.org.

• July 25-27 — Church Media Library Conf. Contact Ian Richardson, director of Communication Services at MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3290 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 290. E-mail: irichardson@mcb.org.

- July 27-August 1 — 4 Centrifuge. Contact LifeWay Christian Resources (see above).

• August 8-10 — Pastors and Wives Conf. Contact Matt Buckles, director of Church

Administration/Pastoral Ministries at MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3308 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 308. E-mail: mbuckles@mcb.org.

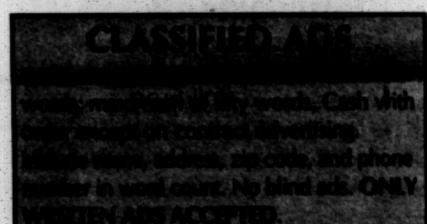
Changes to the Gulfshore 2002 registration process include an earlier registration date for Mississippi Baptist Convention Board churches. The new postmark date for registration is February 1.

Out of state churches may also register early by postmarking their registrations by April 1.

"In appreciation of the constant support and affirmation from the churches of Mississippi, churches that register 25 or more people during the month of February and arrive on check-in day with 25 or more people will receive one free registration," Simmons said.

The free registration offer applies only to MBCB-sponsored conferences, not LifeWay-supported conferences, he added.

A Gulfshore registration brochure can be obtained by contacting Simmons at Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, 100 First Street, Pass Christian, MS 39571. Telephone: (228) 452-7261. E-mail: fsimmons@mcb.org.



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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH is seeking full-time pastor with seminary degree and some experience. Send resumes to First Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, 1710 McArthur Drive, Mansfield, LA 71052.

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It was two weeks before Christmas, and whoever the folks are that do this kind of thing, released a study revealing that almost 100,000,000 Americans are overweight or obese.

When I read that I began to think of some folks I knew who were overweight or obese, but then I read on and began to realize that they were talking about me too. The further I read, the more I didn't like whoever these people are who did the study and I appreciated even less the fact that they would publicize their findings just before Christmas.

I thought to myself that it was bad enough to have to carry all the extra weight around and then to have added to the load, the burden of guilt. It was just not right! I then began to think in a different way realizing that shooting the messenger, or at least being perturbed at the messenger, was not productive.

So, I began to rationalize my situation by considering that these folks probably had not done the study correctly. There are not that many people who are overweight.

Besides, if there are, it's not that big of a deal — wrong, wrong, and wrong! A quick look around and you'll see that most of us have been feasting on the fat of the land too much and too often. It does make a considerable difference in the health of each one of us.

These folks doing the study didn't just tell

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NOBTS offering third course in music series

January 21 begins the third of eight courses at nine locations in Mississippi sponsored by New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) in New Orleans.

The eight courses are:
• Song leading.
• Worship Planning.

- Reading Music: Rhythm / Pitch.
- Reading Music: Harmony / Melody.
- Hymnology.
- Music Administration / Staff Relations.
- Survey of Music Resources.
- Class Voice.

The courses are designed to provide basic training for bivocational ministers and other music leaders in churches.

The eight courses meet two hours per week, and each course is eight weeks in length.

The cycle of courses is scheduled over a two-year period. Each course is independent and has no prerequisite. Each student who completes the eight courses earns a Church Music Certificate from New Orleans Seminary plus a credit of eight hours toward a campus degree program.

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do with our spirit, our relationships, and our walk with Jesus.

In the same vein as the problem with our physical weight, some of us are carrying around too much spiritual weight. We take in a lot more than we put into practice. We go to classes, listen to sermons, attend seminars, and read, understand, and gulp down many more marvelous spiritual truths than we ever get translated

into productive, helpful, serving. The result is that we become spiritual fat cats eager to eat more and slower to act.

There are others of us who have things in us that harm and destroy — diseases that rob us of spiritual vitality, like jealousy, envy, ill will, mean spirited attitudes, greed, and bitterness. If you think developing the disease of diabetes is bad, just strap on one of these spiritual sicknesses, and you will find it is far worse.

The wonderful thing is that you don't have to carry this baggage into next year, or even tomorrow. The Lord can lift those burdens, cure our illness, renew our living, and send us on our way. He is a life-changing, loving, good God who can rid us of all unneeded and unwanted fat cells that frustrate us.

The Apostle Paul expressed it this way in Philippians, "Forgetting those things which are behind..." that's a good thing. As you plan for 2002, get with God and leave those unwanted, unneeded things behind.

Happy New Year!

First Church, Booneville, beginning January 21 (7-9 p.m.). LuAnne Ford, teacher.

Northcrest Church, Meridian, beginning January 21 (6:30-8:30 p.m.). Buddy McElroy, teacher.

Hernando Church, Hernando, beginning January 21 (7-9 p.m.). Barry Tweedy, teacher.

Tri-County Associational Building, Columbia, beginning January 22 (6:30-8:30 p.m.). Kenny Adams, teacher.

Meadville Church, Meadville, beginning January 22 (6:30-8:30 p.m.). Chuck McMinn, teacher.

These classes could be offered at other locations in the state, where 8-10 students are interested in enrolling. For more information, contact Jimmy McCaleb, Church Music Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3273 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 273. E-mail: jmccaleb@mbcb.org.

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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Inaction to action

Acts 6:1-4; James 1:22-27; 2:14-18

By J. Michael Barnett

One of my heroes of history is Alvin C. York, the highly decorated World War I veteran and Christian. The irony of York's story is that he struggled over his role in the war. Is it right to fight or should he proclaim himself a conscientious objector?

He searched the Scripture, and his commitment was made obvious on October 18, 1918. He captured 132 enemy soldiers during the Argonne offensive and received the Congressional Medal of Honor.

York knew what many born again Christians know today, the secular and the sacred cannot be separate. One must actively live his faith.

James emphasizes this truth

by beseeching believers to be "doers of the Word." He says, "biblical faith does such a work in you that it puts you to work" (James 2:14-16; also Eph. 2:8-10). Works do not save the sinner, but are the results of a sinner saved.

James speaks of the person whose faith does not work as having a dead faith. He also says such a one is like a man looking in the mirror and beholding his face.

After he gazes upon himself for a moment he walks away forgetting what he really looks like (James 2:23-24). The mirror of dead faith only shows the natural appearance and there is nothing memorable about it.

However, the mirror of God's Word reflects what one is



Barnett

really like. When one looks into the "perfect law of liberty," he is blessed with the freedom of a transformed life (James 1:25).

The Word of God is called the "perfect law of liberty" because it sets people free to have a real, transforming, and working faith. The word "look" in verse 25 means "to stoop down and consider." It indicates one who inspects and studies the Word of God. The one who continues to stoop down and consider the Word of God has a religion that is pure and undefiled.

"Religion" as used by James in verse 25 means to "tremble." It indicates reverence for the Lord. If one claims to have such a reverence for God he will have a transformed speech (v. 26); a transformed service to others (v. 27a); and a transformed separation from the world (v. 27b).

Verse 27 indicates that pure religion, a religion that is clean

before God, goes beyond ceremony and touches the lives of those who are in need.

This week's lesson also draws our attention to Acts 6:1-7. The church had been pooling resources from its membership to meet each other's needs during a harsh time of persecution. Food was distributed daily to widows.

No doubt the teaching of James was being put to practice. However, the Greek widows were being somewhat neglected. It is obvious that this complaint was legitimate because the Apostles developed a strategy to correct the problem.

Seven men were chosen from the congregation to serve tables and see to it that every one in need was taken care of. Many scholars claim these men were the first deacons, but the principles of pure religion and genuine working faith illustrated here apply to all believers.

Acts 6:3 details the saving faith of these men. The text illustrates for us a working faith.

It is important that all of us who serve the Lord by serving others first be of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom. Pure religion and genuine working faith cannot be manifested without these traits.

No record exists of these seven men complaining, shirking responsibility, or claiming a place of honor and authority. As a matter of fact, they went on to do great things for God and the early church. They simply saw someone in need and did more than talk, their faith was put to work (see James 2:15-16).

It is only possible that some will wrestle as Alvin York did over fighting a war, but it is certain that many believers will struggle over incorporating the sacred into their secular lives. They will desire theirs to be a seven-day-week religion. It is the perfect of law of liberty that will give them freedom and transformation to serve others.

Barnett is pastor of First Church, Ocean Springs.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Remember God

Deuteronomy 7:1-8:20

By Carleen McGraw

In Genesis 15, God explained to Abraham things that would happen to future generations of his descendants, even to their bondage in Egypt.

In Deuteronomy 7, centuries have passed; God has liberated Abraham's descendants from the years of bondage, and they are now camped on the east side of the Jordan ready to cross over into the Promised Land — occupied by "seven nations larger and stronger than you."

Now Moses, the God-appointed leader of Abraham's descendants, reminds them that when "the Lord your God has delivered them (the seven nations) over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally" (v. 2).

God commanded his people

to break down the altars of these nations, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols in the fire. God's people were not to associate with the idol worshipers of Canaan socially, politically, or in any other manner.

"For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession" (7:6).

We don't know how these peoples had come to occupy this land, but they were trespassers in the eyes of the Lord because he had promised the land to Abraham and his descendants.

There is something else Moses wants God's people to understand and keep in mind



McGraw

as they prepare to enter the Promised Land. "The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples" (v. 7).

They were a multitude of Hebrew slaves who had been freed by the power of the Lord their God from Egyptian taskmasters who demanded more than was humanly possible for them to deliver. He not only had freed them but had watched over them 40 years, preparing them for taking over a land "flowing with milk and honey."

Why did the Lord their God favor them? "...it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt" (v. 8).

He had redeemed them from slavery as evidence of his love for them, and he will be faithful

to keep his covenant of love "to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments" (v. 9).

If they would love him, pay attention, and follow the laws and decrees he had given them, "the Lord your God will keep his covenant of love with you, as he swore to your forefathers" (v. 12); the people would increase in number, their land would produce bountiful crops, their livestock would increase, and the Lord would keep the people healthy.

Moses reminded them that there was no reason for them to fear the nations occupying the land because they were stronger; they were simply to remember what "the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt."

They had seen the miraculous signs and wonders the Lord had performed in order to bring them out of Egypt, and the "Lord your God" is still in control, and he "will do the same to all the peoples you now fear."

The theme of Deuteronomy 8 seems to be "remember!" Remember how the Lord your

God led you in the desert for 40 years; how he caused you to be hungry, then fed you manna to teach "you that man does not live by bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord" (v. 3).

Remember your clothes did not wear out and your feet didn't swell during all those years. Remember to "observe the commands of the Lord your God" and reverence him.

Remember "the Lord your God" is bringing you into the good land. "When you have eaten and are satisfied," remember where the blessings came from; don't ever become proud and think you did it all — because when you do, you will be destroyed just as the nations before you "for not obeying the Lord your God."

Deuteronomy 7 and 8 contain a tremendous message for us today. Read these chapters and remember that God has not changed, his laws and decrees have not changed, and his love never changes!

McGraw is a member of First Church, Louisville.

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The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

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THE VILLAGE VIEW



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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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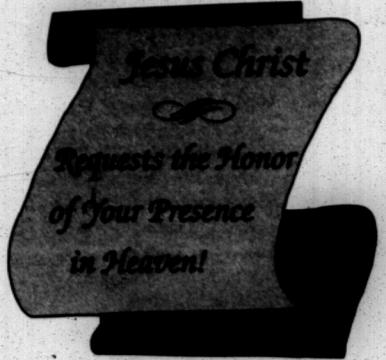
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Pearl River Baptists help build Iowa church



YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (*I have sinned.*)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (*I repent.*)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (*I believe in Jesus.*)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. (*I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.*)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

KINGSLEY, Iowa (BP) — There's new life in Kingsley, Iowa — New Life Baptist Church, that is, which moved into its first building during the summer with help from Mississippi and Arkansas Baptist volunteers.

Volunteer builders from Pearl River Association in Picayune and Pulaski Association in Little Rock, (Ark.) came to the western Iowa town to erect the building, starting in May, while the congregation continued meeting in a mobile chapel owned by the Baptist Convention of Iowa.

Teams came in cycles for three months. A team of youth from the World Changers project in Sioux City also helped with some of the later finishing projects. Volunteers stayed in some of the homes of New Life members, others in mobile homes or local motels.

God's blessing marked the undertaking. His hand protected the workers. At one point, a volunteer from Mississippi was operating a tractor with a front-end loader full of sand. The weight of the sand overturned the tractor, trapping the man under the machinery.

Other volunteers nearby rushed to his aid and were able to quickly lift the tractor with hydraulic jacks. Emergency rescue workers summoned the LifeFlight helicopter from Sioux City Mercy Hospital, which landed in a nearby hayfield.

The man suffered broken ribs and internal injuries, but was able to recover in a few weeks and returned to the project site.



NEW LIFE AT NEW HOME.—The first building for New Life Baptist Church in Kingsley, Iowa, was built during the summer with the help of volunteers from Arkansas and Pearl River Association in Picayune. (BP photo)

Another volunteer worker suffered chest pains during the project but recovered after being hospitalized and treated for a heart condition.

In addition to the construction effort, Backyard Bible clubs and youth rallies were conducted by some of the members of the mission teams in Kingsley and in nearby Pierson, with professions of faith recorded by 16 children and youth.

The church-planting effort in Kingsley started in 1997 when Les Stevens, a deacon of the nearby Southern Hills Church in Sioux City sensed a call to the ministry and began preaching in the northwest Iowa area.

He asked his pastor, Leo Endel, if there had ever been

any thought given to starting a church in Kingsley. They agreed to pray about the matter.

Just a week later, Endel was shaking hands at the door of Southern Hills' sanctuary with a lady from Kingsley who had driven into Sioux City for worship. "You need to start a church in Kingsley," she told the pastor.

That was all Endel and Stevens needed to set in motion a plan for a mission congregation in Kingsley.

The only question Southern Hills' missions committee had for the two church-planting ministers was, "Where will we get the money?"

A few weeks later, Perkinston Church in Perkinston responded to a missions need they had

heard about at an On Mission Celebration a few weeks earlier where the Northwest Iowa Association's then-associational missionary, Mark Elliott, had spoken of the needs for planting churches in Iowa.

The phone rang in Leo Endel's office on a Sunday evening. "Brother Leo, you don't need some money to help one of your mission churches buy a building or some property, do you?" the caller asked. Endel had just visited in Kingsley a few days earlier to look into the cost of buying a closed church building.

Perkinston Church offered \$30,000 to the new congregation to help buy property where a church building could be erected. With this boost in support, the Kingsley mission church began to rally in attendance and enthusiasm, with 30-40 people soon worshiping in the local high school building.

Current pastor Cecil Dale moved to Kingsley in 1999 from Omaha, Neb.

"As I look around each day at the new building we now have," Dale reflected, "I recognize the fact that it is just impossible for this small congregation to be able to build such a wonderful facility all by themselves."

"It is literally humanly impossible, but we have a big God! It is he who deserves the credit. He has worked through Southern Baptists across the nation, and especially through our Mississippi and Arkansas partners. We are truly blessed," Dale said.

Officer's witness results in 29 professions of faith

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (BP) — Chattanooga Police Sergeant John A. Baker made a final appeal to his fellow police officers on Dec. 15. It was the day of his funeral.

At his funeral at Grace Church, a tape was played of a Sept. 27 sermon Baker delivered to some 250 officers at the Country Place Restaurant. Baker knew he had a cancer "death sentence," and the message he delivered at the Country Place restaurant resulted in 29 police officers accepting Jesus Christ.

Paul Lee, a sergeant in the Chattanooga Police Dept., and Baker's friend, said Baker "has successfully accomplished his last mission. He has accepted his transfer. He is now pounding his new beat on the streets of gold."

Hundreds of officers gathered at the church also heard tapes of hymns sung by the officer in the emotional rites. Baker died Dec. 12 after a short bout with cancer in his pancreas and liver.

The 36-year-old Southern Baptist police officer is survived by his wife, Zina, and two small sons.

Lee told of how he had met with Baker on the funeral plans. He said Baker had not wanted his family to have to deal with it. He said, "He was always putting others before himself."

Lee said the officer known as "Gabby" to his co-workers "loved his job and loved

his fellow officers." He said he would pray for each of the patrol officers by name. He said Baker "loved to laugh and he loved a well-placed practical joke, but his ultimate mission was to tell others about his commitment to Jesus Christ."

Chattanooga Police Chief Jimmie Dotson said Baker "had a great work ethic and attitude, but he will best be remembered as being true and honest to God's

calling." Dotson recalled Baker's mission trip to Romania where he helped form an international chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Peace Officers.

"His greatest concern was for you," that his fellow officers would join him in Heaven, Dotson said.

Dotson said Baker "refused to take any medication. He said he wanted to remain alert so God could use every ounce of him every moment he had left on earth."

The chief had ministers and chaplains in the office stand, and he urged officers to speak with them after the funeral. He said, "If you want to be with John, spend some time with them before you leave today."

Chief Dotson put on his cap and saluted the casket. He said, "John, enjoy your new assignment." Then the tape was played of the Country Place sermon, in which Baker said, "I can stand up here and be happy because I know where I'm headed. I love you guys too much to let you go to hell on my watch."

The tape concluded with Baker singing, "It Is Well With My Soul."

"There were a lot of tears," said fellow officer John Stuermer. "It was a very powerful moment."

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Baker